

### ***D. V. R. Project H.I.R.E.***

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation was awarded \$8.8 million in federal ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funding. This offers Washington VR a unique opportunity to stimulate the economy in the short term and implement innovative strategies to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. These are one-time supplemental funds that come with an expectation of wise investment and use of these funds to strengthen the vocational services available to individuals with disabilities, drive reform and improve results for people with disabilities. The President and the Governor are committed to ensuring that ARRA funds are spent with an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability.

#### ***Project H.I.R.E.***

Project H.I.R.E. - Hiring Individuals with disabilities who are Ready for Employment. The project sets a high goal of placing 1,000 VR eligible individuals in full-time jobs with benefits, making mid-to-high range wages in demand occupations by June 30, 2011. There are hundreds of VR eligible individuals across the state that have completed technical/certificate programs or have relevant work experience that are currently unemployed or underemployed. That's the target population to be served in Project H.I.R.E.

#### ***Project H.I.R.E Contractors***

Organizations including community colleges and Workforce Development Councils in the community have agreed to help serve VR eligible, employment ready job seekers. They will assist in recruiting job ready individuals and identify employment opportunities that result in accelerated placement in:

- full-time jobs (35+ hours per week) with benefits
- earning mid-to-high wages (\$15/per hour depending on the area)
- in demand occupations - such as health care, information technology, green jobs, energy, manufacturing, aerospace, international trade, other stimulus projects

By July of 2011, DVR will have developed better working relationships with workforce partners and demand occupation employers throughout the state. A broader range of VR eligible customers will choose to apply for services with DVR with the assurance that they get assistance to achieve their vocational goals and obtain full-time jobs with benefits in demand occupations. This project is truly a part of economic recovery in Washington!